



MINUTES

Seven Valleys Tourism Committee

held at

Council Administration Centre
176 - Training Room
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Wednesday 30 April 2025

at 4:00 PM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Acknowledgement of Country	3
2. Present.....	3
3. Apologies.....	3
4. Declaration of Interest.....	3
5. Confirmation of Minutes	3
6. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	3
7. Staff Reports	4
7.1. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairperson	4
7.2. Events Program	5
7.3. Role and focus of the Seven Valleys Tourism Committee	5
7.4. Branding and Social Media	5
8. General Business	6
9. Meeting Close	7

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 4.00pm.

1. Acknowledgement of Country

Lithgow City Council acknowledges Wiradjuri Elders past and present of the Wiradjuri nation - the original custodians of the land on which the Lithgow's communities reside. The Council also extends our respects to our neighbouring nations.

2. Present

Clr Cassandra Coleman, Clr Tom Evangelidis, Clr Ray Smith, Clr Eric Mahoney, Rachael Kay, Johanna Koleda, Brett Groves, Sharon Howard, Ann Thompson, Graeme Pike, Trevor Evans (guest), Lucie Novakova (guest), Mandy Wiggins, Mark Thomas, Andrew Chalk.

Officers: Shaun Elwood (Director People & Places), Simon Francis (Tourism Manager)

Welcome was given to the new members of the committee who were unable to attend the previous months meeting.

3. Apologies

Louise Wallace, Wendy Stephens, Clr Daryl Goodwin

4. Declaration of Interest

Nil

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The previous minutes were tabled and discussed.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Deferral of the following agenda items from the previous meeting:

- Appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair
- Events Program outline
- Role and Focus of the Committee

7. Staff Reports

7.1. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairperson

Clr Tom Evangelidis was nominated for the Chairperson role, unopposed in the nomination process.

Rachael Kay was nominated unopposed for the Deputy Chairperson role.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee endorse the appointment of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

MOVED: Clr Eric Mahoney

SECONDED: Clr Ray S

CARRIED

7.2. Events Program

The Director People & Places informed the committee of Councils calling for Expression of Interest for events sponsorship, currently available for application until 2nd June. Questions were asked from the committee:

- Total amount of sponsorship -\$45,000
- How it isto be allocated - On competitive assessment against predetermined criteria.
- Who is on the Events Working Party – Cr Ring, Cr Fredericks, Cr Evangelidis, Cr Mahoney
- How is the EOI being advertised – Local media, Social media and within industry.

The Council endorsed Events program was outlined by the Director People & Places including the following funding allocations agreed by Council:

\$90,000 allocation for Lithgow Halloween 2025

\$90,000 allocation for Lithgow Christmas Concert 2025

\$10,000 for Wallerawang NYE Fireworks

Up to \$15,000 for Capertee Valley Bird Festival

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee note the formation and progress of the Events Working Group, and note the schedule of events for financial year 2025-26 approved at the March 2024 meeting of Council.

MOVED: Rachael Kay

SECONDED: Clr Eric Mahoney

CARRIED

7.3. Role and focus of the Seven Valleys Tourism Committee

Our Seven Valleys Tourism Committee has the potential to be more effective with representation from a larger section of the tourism industry. General committee discussion on expectations and engagement within industry and how the committee can assist.

The Council Operations Plan and budget for FY 2025/26 is on public exhibition and individuals and organisations can make a submission in support of Council allocating a tourism marketing budget.

The committee was advised that there is work underway from a community group to create a Lithgow Progress Association.

Placemaking was discussed as an opportunity for the committee to advocate for. Grant funds for placemaking projects are now harder to come by.

The committee will be asked to provide agenda items in the lead up to meetings.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee note the role and focus of the Seven Valleys Tourism Committee.

MOVED: Brett Groves

SECONDED: Mark Thomas

CARRIED

7.4. Branding and Social Media

Ben Andrews of Destination Store addressed the Committee and presented a detailed report into the very strong performance of Visitsevenvalleys social media pages (Facebook, Instagram). Important statistics analysis and topics in the presentation included:

- Non-followers outnumbering followers
 - The exponential growth of followers and extended reach figures
 - Resonance of the content with the target market
 - Difference in approach using video and reels and aspirational content
 - Seven Valleys Brand helping with a re-education of what the Lithgow LGA has to offer
 - Operator directed posts doing very well
 - Both social media platforms are the best performing out of all Destination Store social media accounts they handle for well established tourism destinations.
 - All growth so far has been organic, no paid as yet, held back by lack of confirmation to progress the Seven Valleys Brand
 - A style guide or 'how to' will be developed for businesses to align themselves with the brand.
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The Director People & Places spoke to a presentation about the 7V Seven Valleys branding. The Committee was told of the next steps, including a Councillor information session, new website, soft launch culminating in a hard launch later in 2025, website domain names, and were shown concept creative material. The need for new creative content including photos and videos was discussed. The chairperson commented that boldness of the brand needs photos equally bold to accompany it.

Questions were asked by the committee about the method of establishing the social media target market, parameters, demographics and why the focus was just on organic content. Committee members discussed getting the community to see the success of the brand, effect of small amount of negativity in some sectors of the local community, the need to ignore negativity, and more focus on Wiradjuri.

Committee sentiment for the brand and the brand assets was very positive and requested progression to bring the Seven Valleys re-brand to market.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee note the latest developments with 'Seven Valleys' branding and the directly related social media results.

MOVED: Johanna Koleda

SECONDED: Cllr Ray Smith

CARRIED

8. General Business

Rydal Showground Fees and effect on Daffodils at Rydal and Jet Black 24 Hour event – Tourism Manager brought to the attention of the committee that the increase in fees at Rydal Showground was potentially placing events at risk. The Tourism Manager will contact Rydal Showground Trust for comment on the recent large increase in hire fees.

Camping at Tony Luchetti Showground – Rachael Kay

Rachael asked the committee to consider support for establishing camping at Tony Luchetti Showground. The condition of the turf, mixed use and lack of facilities was discussed, as well as the impact on local businesses offering camping facilities. The general consensus was to investigate the terms of the Crown lease to see whether camping is allowed under the terms of the lease.

Johanna Koleda brought the opening of Brett Groves new gallery at 80 Main Street to the attention of the committee. Brett responded with his thoughts on the ability of his shop to help spruce up Main Street and provide a Wiradjuri Experience. The committee commented on the wealth of artistic talent in and from the Lithgow LGA/Seven Valleys.

Trevor Evans raised the issue of the Meadow Flat 'golden' Poplars that is increasingly leading to a large amount of vehicles in the vicinity of Curly Dick Road and access roads to properties. There is a danger to visitors, pedestrian and vehicle mix, and regulated parking needs to be looked at as an option to increase safety and reduce the impact on surrounding properties.

Tourism Manager agreed to raise this site management issue with the TASC for development of appropriate traffic and site management for the 20226 season.

Cllr Tom Evangelidis encouraged the committee to use the forum to voice ideas or concerns.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the items discussed in general business.

MOVED: Rachael Kay

SECONDED: Johanna Koleda

CARRIED

9. Meeting Close

Next Meeting: Wednesday 18 June 2025 - 176 Meeting Room 4:00pm-6:00pm

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 6.12PM.